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Office of the Chief of Naval Operations
Washington DC 20350-2000

OPNAVINST 1750.1D
Pers-662
27 June 1994

OPNAV INSTRUCTION 1750.1D

From: Chief of Naval Operations
To: All Ships and Stations (less Marine Corps field addressees not having Navy personnel attached)

Subj: NAVY FAMILY OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM

Ref: (a) U.S. Navy Regulations 1990
(b) OPNAVINST 3120.32C
(c) Navy Family Ombudsman Manual NAVPERS 15571
(d) Title 10 U.S.C., Chapter 81, Section 1588 (Acceptance of Voluntary Services for Family Support Programs)
(e) Title 5 U.S.C., Subsection 552a (Privacy Act of 1974)
(f) OPNAV Notice 5211, 18 March 1993
(g) Navy Family Ombudsman Training Guide
(h) OPNAVINST 5218.7A
(i) SECNAVINST 1752.3
(j) OPNAVINST 5350.4B
(k) OPNAVINST 1754.1A
(l) Joint Federal Travel Regulations, Chapter 6, Volume II

Encl: (1) Navy Family Ombudsman Program Guidelines
(2) Ombudsman Quality Management Board (OQMB) Guidelines

1. Purpose. To update policy and procedures for the implementation of the Navy Family Ombudsman Program and Command Family Ombudsman Programs. References (a) through (l) apply. This instruction is a complete revision and should be reviewed in its entirety.

2. Cancellation. OPNAVINST 1750.1C.

3. Discussion. The morale, health, welfare and efficiency of command personnel is the absolute responsibility of the commanding officer as defined in references (a) and (b). Inherent within this charge is the responsibility for the morale, health and welfare of command families. The command family

ombudsman assists the commanding officer in carrying out this responsibility.

4. Applicability. The provisions of this instruction apply to all active duty and Naval Reserve commands and/or units.

5. Action

a. The Chief of Naval Operations shall appoint two Navy-wide Ombudsmen-at-Large: spouse of the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (when appropriate); and, Chairman, Navy Wifeline Association.

b. Commanding officers and/or officers in charge shall designate a command family ombudsman. The Navy Family Ombudsman Program shall function per enclosure (1).

c. The Chief of Naval Personnel (Pers-00) through the Assistant Chief of Naval Personnel for Personal Readiness and Community Support (Pers-6) shall establish the Ombudsman Quality Management Board (OQMB) to function as an advisory board for standardization and support of the Navy Family Ombudsman Program. Guidelines for the OQMB are provided in enclosure (2).

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NAVY FAMILY OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM GUIDELINESSECTION AINTRODUCTION

1. Navy family ombudsmen have proven to be valuable assets in facilitating communication between commanding officers and family members, fostering a better understanding of the needs and viewpoints of Navy members and their families and providing information and assistance to family members within the command.
2. The commanding officer selects the command family ombudsman. The ombudsman represents and reports directly to the commanding officer and works with the internal chain of command as directed by the commanding officer.
3. Reference (d), providing a legal basis for ombudsmen and volunteers who are associated with military family support programs, authorizes coverage for these volunteers with workers compensation insurance and protects them from liability under the Federal Tort Claims Act.
4. The Navy Family Ombudsman Program and Family Service Centers are complementary programs. Ombudsmen reach out to individual command family members. Family Service Centers are a resource for ombudsmen in carrying out their responsibilities and offer support to ombudsmen in such areas as, but not limited to: coordination of ombudsman training, establishment of ombudsman support groups, provision of resources and information when individual family problems are presented to the ombudsman, assistance to commands in the effective use and recognition of ombudsmen, and maintenance of area ombudsman rosters.
5. Navy Wifeline Association volunteers perform many of the same functions as command family ombudsmen in that they provide a vital communication link between the Navy institution and service members and their families. While serving in this capacity, Wifeline volunteers are entitled to official mail privileges and other administrative support as appropriate.
6. September 14 (or the preceding Friday if the 14th falls on a weekend), is designated as Ombudsman Appreciation Day. This is the anniversary date of the founding of the Navy Family Ombudsman

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Program in 1970 and has been designated as a special day to recognize the contributions of the volunteer ombudsmen.

SECTION B

CODE OF ETHICS

A Navy family ombudsman shall:

1. Support the command's mission.
2. Work within the chain of command as directed.
3. Maintain confidentiality.
4. Maintain the highest standards of professionalism.

SECTION C

SELECTION AND APPOINTMENT GUIDELINES

1. The commanding officer shall determine the number of ombudsmen required based on command needs. Naval Reserve Activities supporting Selected Reserve (SELRES) Units are to assign an adequate number of ombudsmen to meet all active and SELRES family requirements. It is not necessary to have a separate ombudsman for each SELRES unit.

a. Eligibility. Candidates for command family ombudsman must be the spouse of an active duty or Selected Reserve member within the command.

b. Qualifications

(1) Ombudsmen candidates should have the following attributes: maturity, judgment, discretion, reliability and a positive attitude.

(2) Ombudsmen candidates should understand and support the Navy and command programs/policies.

(3) Ombudsmen candidates must have the time, dedication and commitment to be a command family ombudsman.

2. An ombudsman position description shall be published.

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3. Interested command spouses shall be invited to apply for the position by submitting resumes and/or applications. Prior to submitting a resume/application, the effect on the family, of being an ombudsman, must be considered. The commitment of one's time, whether it be for meetings, training or telephone calls into the night, is extensive. As in many endeavors, a supportive family can positively impact the success of any ombudsman.

4. The commanding officer shall establish a screening committee to interview candidates.

a. Screening committee membership may include the executive officer, command master chief, chaplain, current ombudsman, and/or other appropriate persons.

b. The screening committee makes recommendations to the commanding officer for final selection of the command family ombudsman.

5. Upon appointment, the commanding officer will present the ombudsman with command name tag and Navy Family Ombudsman Pin.

6. The commanding officer shall issue an official letter appointing the ombudsman. A copy of the letter should be provided to the type commander, Family Service Center ombudsman coordinator, ombudsman assembly/advisory board, Navy Wifeline Association and other appropriate organizations.

7. Prior to a change of command, the incumbent ombudsman will submit a letter of resignation. At the incoming commanding officer's discretion, the ombudsman may be retained and/or a new or additional ombudsmen may be selected.

SECTION D

COMMANDING OFFICER ACTIONS

Commanding officers shall:

1. Ensure that the command family ombudsman receives a copy of this instruction and reference (c).

2. Furnish the ombudsman with a letter of introduction to facilities/programs of other agencies/military services as needed.

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3. Provide the command family ombudsman with a roster containing pertinent information needed for the performance of official duties. The extent of the information to be provided is at the discretion of the commanding officer and can include service member's name, social security number, home address and telephone number; and name, home address and telephone number for their spouse or point of contact (e.g., other family member or family care provider). References (e) and (f) provide for the release of this information to the ombudsman without the consent of the individuals listed when the ombudsman is acting in an official capacity. Commands are encouraged to update this roster regularly.

4. Work with appointee to develop scope of ombudsman program to meet command needs.

5. Discuss terms of appointment, probationary period (if any), and length of appointment.

6. Provide support for the Command Family Ombudsman Program as command resources permit.

a. Program expenses. A telephone answering machine should be provided for the command family ombudsman's use. Supplies/support items such as paper, envelopes, pens, copier service, clerical assistance, computers, use of government phones and command telephone credit cards, and government vehicle transportation should be budgeted and may be provided through appropriated or nonappropriated funds as command resources permit.

b. Reimbursable expenses. The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Years 1992 and 1993 Conference Report provides authorization for use of appropriated or nonappropriated funds in support of ombudsmen. Section 345 states "Use of appropriated funds for expenses relating to certain voluntary services. Section 1588(c) of title 10, United States Code, is amended by striking out "may only be made from nonappropriated funds" in the third sentence and inserting in lieu thereof "may be made from appropriated or nonappropriated funds."

"...This Senate amendment contained a provision (sec. 620) that would authorize the use of appropriated funds for the reimbursement of incidental expenses which are incurred by a person providing voluntary services as an ombudsman or family center volunteer."

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Section 345 and reference (d) provide for reimbursement of personal expenses incurred during performance of ombudsman duties when appropriate. The commanding officer shall determine which expenses are eligible for reimbursement, funding levels and whether command appropriated funds, nonappropriated funds, or other funding sources such as donations from spouse clubs should be used. Reimbursement shall be available on an equitable basis for all command family ombudsmen. Ombudsmen must submit receipts for reimbursement to the commanding officer or a designated representative. Reimbursement is limited to the following specific items:

(1) Child care. Reimbursement not to exceed the local rate of the Navy Child Development Center. Reimbursement for child care expenses for ombudsmen does not change established Child Development Center usage priorities.

(2) Mileage, parking and tolls. Reimbursement for mileage will be at the government privately owned vehicle (POV) rate. Mileage should be documented in order to claim reimbursement. Parking and toll reimbursement requires presentation of receipts.

(3) Incidental expenses. Reimbursement for incidental expenses (e.g. individual appreciation dinners, awards, refreshments), not to exceed \$25.00 per ombudsman, per event, are authorized at the discretion of the commanding officer and may be made from appropriated or nonappropriated funds.

(4) Telephone calls. Reimbursement of toll calls not covered by command telephone credit cards may be made upon presentation of invoice.

(5) Training expenses. Training is essential to ensure that command family ombudsmen can perform functions described in this instruction. Ombudsman training should be planned and budgeted for and can be provided through appropriated or nonappropriated funds at the discretion of the commanding officer. Training is outlined in Section F and reference (g).

7. Allow use of official mail as authorized in reference (i). Mailings must carry the return address of the command and not the personal address of the ombudsman. A command Familygram or other informational mailings may be used to announce command-sponsored activities and provide other official U.S. government information of importance to service members and their families. Information concerning voluntary organizations (e.g., spouse clubs) may be

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included if it supports morale, health and welfare of command personnel and their families and does not violate any of the restrictions placed on the use of official mail by reference (i).

a. Commanding officers should apply the following guidelines in determining whether the content of newsletters is official:

(1) information related to unit mission and readiness, including family readiness;

(2) information which is educational in nature, designed to promote informed self-reliant servicemembers and families;

(3) information regarding servicemembers and families which promotes unit cohesion and helps strengthen the ongoing esprit among family members within the unit;

b. Information regarding private organizations, fund raisers, and commercial ventures is expressly prohibited.

8. Promote understanding and visibility of the command family ombudsman position within the command by continued support and publicity.

9. Facilitate routine communications between the executive officer, fleet/force/command master chief, chaplain, Family Service Center and the command family ombudsman so that ombudsmen may carry out their responsibilities to command families.

10. Ensure the ombudsman understands the specific areas of information in which notification of the commanding officer is mandatory.

11. For deploying units, agree on regularly scheduled meetings when in port and upon method of communication when deployed.

12. Establish procedures whereby the ombudsman can function and be supported when the unit is deployed.

13. Recognize the contributions of the command family ombudsman at appropriate times such as Ombudsman Appreciation Day and at the conclusion of their appointment.

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SECTION E

OMBUDSMAN ROLES AND FUNCTIONS

1. The command family ombudsman shall fulfill the following roles:

a. Serve as the primary link/liaison between command families and the command.

b. Serve as the primary communicator of information between the command and command families.

2. The command family ombudsman shall perform the following functions:

a. Communicate regularly with command families. Such efforts might include, but are not limited to:

(1) the development of a regular command-approved newsletter or contribution to the existing command or base newsletter of an ombudsman column on matters of interest to command families (reference (c) applies).

(2) the establishment and regular use of a command sponsored telephone "Careline" for periodic information flow.

(3) the establishment of a phone tree for dissemination of immediate or emergency information, when directed by the commanding officer.

b. Provide information and outreach to command family members. Interact and cooperate with organizations and military departments such as, but not limited to: Family Service Centers, chaplain's office, medical treatment facilities, Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society, American Red Cross, Navy Wifeline Association and legal assistance offices. These organizations are valuable resources in obtaining assistance for command family members.

c. Refer individuals in need of professional assistance to appropriate resources. Ombudsmen may provide support to individuals and refer them for counseling. Counseling shall not be provided by ombudsmen. Counseling may be provided only by qualified clinicians.

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d. Act as an advocate for command family members. Ombudsmen, by using their knowledge of the system, can help access the appropriate level of chain of command for intervention and for the forwarding of appropriate requests/grievances while exercising confidentiality.

3. In addition to responding to command family needs, the commanding officer may direct the ombudsman to:

a. Participate in indoctrination and orientation programs for new command members to describe ombudsman functions and available family support programs.

b. Assist in organizing and implementing a welcome program and/or act as a family coordinator as part of the command Sponsor Program.

c. Represent the command on committees, boards, and working groups in the military or civilian communities concerned with services and support to command families.

d. Participate in activities, as directed by the commanding officer, which would promote the morale, health and welfare of command families.

4. Command ombudsmen shall organize, maintain, and update all records concerning their ombudsman responsibilities and resources. Records will be maintained in such a way as to expedite a smooth turnover to future ombudsmen.

5. The ombudsman will, as directed by the commanding officer, establish a close working relationship with the Command Family Support Team to promote the welfare of command families. For purposes of the ombudsman program, the Command Family Support Team is defined as the commanding officer, executive officer, command master chief, ombudsmen and others designated by the commanding officer.

6. The ombudsman's responsibilities do not include social duties (e.g., these duties are often assumed by a formal or informal spouse club/family support group). However, announcements of social events which promote the morale, health and welfare of command families may be included in the ombudsman newsletter.

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SECTION FCONFIDENTIALITY

1. While most information coming to the attention of the ombudsman will be routine in nature, some situations will warrant the attention of the commanding officer. Upon appointment, the commanding officer will notify the ombudsman of those areas in which he/she wishes to be kept informed.

2. Some information received by the ombudsman will be sensitive in nature. It is important that confidentiality be maintained in order to protect the privacy of those involved. For purposes of the Ombudsman Program, confidential information is defined by the commanding officer as sensitive information about a service member or family member that is kept within the system for official use only and is relayed only on a need-to-know basis.

a. Confidentiality is required of the ombudsman with regard to the personal privacy of those seeking assistance.

b. A breach of confidentiality on the part of an ombudsman is cause for relief from the position, as determined by the commanding officer.

3. In certain situations, it is necessary to report specific cases to appropriate agencies. For cases that must be reported, the ombudsman will advise the commanding officer or a designated representative, and will contact the appropriate referral resource (e.g., medical treatment facility, Child Protective Services, Family Advocacy Representative, etc.) or coordinate with the Family Service Center staff to make a referral for professional assistance. The following are examples of situations requiring immediate referral:

a. Potential suicide situations.

b. Suspected and established child abuse/neglect, as required by law in all states and by the Family Advocacy Program in reference (i), must be reported to the Family Advocacy Representative. In the absence of the Family Advocacy Representative, report to the Family Service Center or directly to the civilian police or local social service agency.

c. Known incidents of spouse abuse must be reported to the Family Advocacy Representative or to the Family Service Center. Inform the family member that the information will be relayed to

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the Family Advocacy Representative who will provide further advice and/or assistance. Advise the family member regarding counseling services available from or through the Family Advocacy Representative and other sources, and that a shelter or safe house can be located if needed.

d. Drug or alcohol abuse as described in reference (j).

e. Potential homicides, violence or life-endangering situations.

4. In those situations where specific cases must be reported to appropriate agencies, the ombudsman will inform the individual that the information will not be protected.

a. The ombudsman will tell the individuals concerned that informing the appropriate agency/individual about their situation is in their best interest and is the best way to obtain professional help.

b. Ombudsmen will be trained to determine appropriate agencies/individuals to be informed. The ombudsman will communicate the relevant information in such cases only to the appropriate agencies/individuals.

5. Any written personal information kept by the ombudsman on family members should be destroyed prior to turnover of administrative files. Any family member requiring special assistance may be brought to the attention of the commanding officer who, in his/her discretion, may inform the incoming ombudsman.

6. The ombudsman shall adhere to the strictest code of confidentiality as defined by their commanding officer in order to protect the privacy of individuals and to maintain the credibility of the Navy Family Ombudsman Program.

SECTION G

OMBUDSMAN TRAINING

1. Ombudsman training is essential for the effective operation of the program. Training and support for command family ombudsmen will be provided through Family Service Centers per references (c), (g) and (k). Family Service Centers will include Reserve ombudsmen in training evolutions when appropriate and provide them information and referral support.

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2. Under the direction of the Navy Family Ombudsman Program Manager (Pers-662), ombudsman training has been standardized to include:

a. Basic Training. Standardized Basic Navy Family Ombudsman Training will be provided to all ombudsmen as outlined in the Navy Family Ombudsman Training Guide (references (c) and (g) apply). Commanding officers should ensure that their ombudsmen receives basic training. Whenever possible, an ombudsman shall have basic training prior to assuming responsibilities of the command family ombudsman position.

b. Advanced Training. Standardized Advanced Training will be provided to all ombudsmen as per reference (c) and (g).

c. On-going Training. Ombudsmen should continue to be trained throughout the duration of their appointment. This can be accomplished through appropriate on-going training which may include Navy-sponsored training such as Navy Information School, Total Quality Leadership, Personal Responsibilities, Values, Education and Training program (PREVENT), as well as Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society Training, other seminars and workshops provided through Family Service Centers and local assemblies.

3. In locations where training is not available, commands may issue invitational travel orders as authorized in reference (1) to enable ombudsmen to obtain training at other installations.

4. In areas where Family Service Center services are not available, local assemblies may be tasked with standardizing ombudsmen training. Commands who need assistance should contact the Navy Family Ombudsman Program Manager (Pers-662) for advice/referral on appropriate training resources.

SECTION H

OMBUDSMEN ASSEMBLIES

1. Base commanders/commanding officers and/or area coordinators where appropriate, and in support of tenant commands, shall establish a Navy Family Ombudsman Assembly and shall appoint an assembly chair/coordinator for the purposes of providing information and support to the area ombudsmen.

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2. To maintain consistency and standardization throughout the Navy, the term ombudsman assembly is designated as the official title for this ombudsman organization.

3. The functions of the ombudsman assembly may include:

a. Act as a resource for ongoing ombudsman training by providing information on topics of interest to the ombudsman community.

b. Serving as liaison for policy discussion and clarification by appropriate local authorities (e.g., NEX, Commissary, Morale, Welfare and Recreation, Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society, Armed Services YMCA, etc., representatives) with regard to items of interest to area ombudsmen.

c. Assistance to commands for recognition and appreciation of all command ombudsmen. Competitions that recognize the accomplishments of an individual ombudsman rather than promote the importance of the total Navy Family Ombudsman Program are inappropriate (references (c) and (g) apply).

d. Maintenance of a current roster of local assembly ombudsmen, with official verification through the filing of a copy of the command letter of appointment with the assembly. A letter of termination from the command is needed to remove the ombudsman from this roster.

e. Other functions as directed by the assembly's sponsor, such as providing area resource handbooks, publishing regular newsletters, providing minutes of assembly meetings, maintaining a calendar of events, and providing other informational materials to members of the assembly.

4. Recommended guidelines for organizing a local assembly:

a. The sponsoring command is defined as the base commander/commanding officer and/or area coordinator who calls the assembly into being and takes responsibility for the assembly.

b. The sponsoring command has the authority, based upon the needs of the area, to determine the appropriate makeup and membership of its assembly. All appointed ombudsmen of member commands, however, shall be invited to participate in assembly activities.

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c. Assembly leadership (selected and appointed by the sponsoring command) should include: chair/coordinator, advisor/advisory board, and ombudsman representatives. Appointment for a specified term shall be in writing.

d. The chair/coordinator should be the spouse of an active duty servicemember, does not have to be an active ombudsman currently serving a command, but should have appropriate experience for the position.

e. The advisor/advisory board may consist of the spouse of a senior military member, a chaplain, a command master chief, ombudsman representation from the assembly, an action officer from the sponsor's staff, and any other interested and appropriately positioned person(s).

f. The advisory board may be charged with program planning, preparing, and regularly updating the roster and other duties as assigned.

g. The action officer from the sponsor's staff shall ensure the assembly and advisory board have the support they need, including materials and clerical assistance, to perform their duties.

h. The sponsoring command is encouraged to have a local ombudsman assembly instruction (this shall preclude the need for local by-laws) and forward a copy for reference as appropriate to the OQMB, via the BUPERS Ombudsman Program Manager, Pers-662.

5. In addition, the following clarifications are made:

a. The assembly is not a policy-making body and in no way should interfere with the individual command/ombudsman relationship.

b. The assembly may make recommendations on community matters which affect the well-being of the area families, but, as a group, may not petition or actively or aggressively protest command-initiated action or policy.

c. Assemblies are information sharing organizations and not organized as social clubs; therefore they shall not establish or maintain treasuries or collect dues for the purpose of sponsoring assembly social activities (reference (c) applies).

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OMBUDSMAN QUALITY MANAGEMENT BOARD GUIDELINES

1. The Ombudsman Quality Management Board (OQMB) shall meet at the direction of the Assistant Chief of Naval Personnel for Personal Readiness and Community Support (Pers-6).
2. Membership of the OQMB shall include: the Navy Family Ombudsman Program Manager; Chaplain Advisor (Pers-6/66 Chaplain); the two Navy-wide Ombudsmen-at-Large; ombudsman representatives from Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet, Commander in Chief, U.S. Atlantic Fleet, Commander in Chief, U.S. Naval Forces Europe, Chief of Naval Education and Training, Commander Naval Recruiting Command, and Commander, Naval Reserve Force; at least one commanding officer (from any claimancy/community); two fleet/force master chiefs; and others appointed by Pers-6 as necessary; reference (c) applies.
3. Functions of the OQMB include:
 - a. Provide input and feedback regarding the operation of the Navy Family Ombudsman Program to the Assistant Chief of Naval Personnel for Personal Readiness and Community Support (Pers-6).
 - b. Review/recommend revisions to pertinent instructions and manuals.
 - c. Provide recommendations to improve support and standardization of the Navy Family Ombudsman Program worldwide.

Enclosure (2)